

THE MASSACHUSETTS WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION



ANNUAL REPORT, FISCAL YEAR 2016 (JULY 2015 – JUNE 2016)

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

MATTHEW A. BEATON
Secretary
Executive Office of Energy and
Environmental Affairs

MEET THE WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION

THE COMMISSION'S ROLE AND STRUCTURE

The Water Resources Commission (Commission) was established in 1956 by the Massachusetts Legislature and is responsible for developing, coordinating, and overseeing the Commonwealth's water policy and planning activities to ensure that Massachusetts will have plentiful water to support health, safety, economic development, and ecological vitality for generations to come.

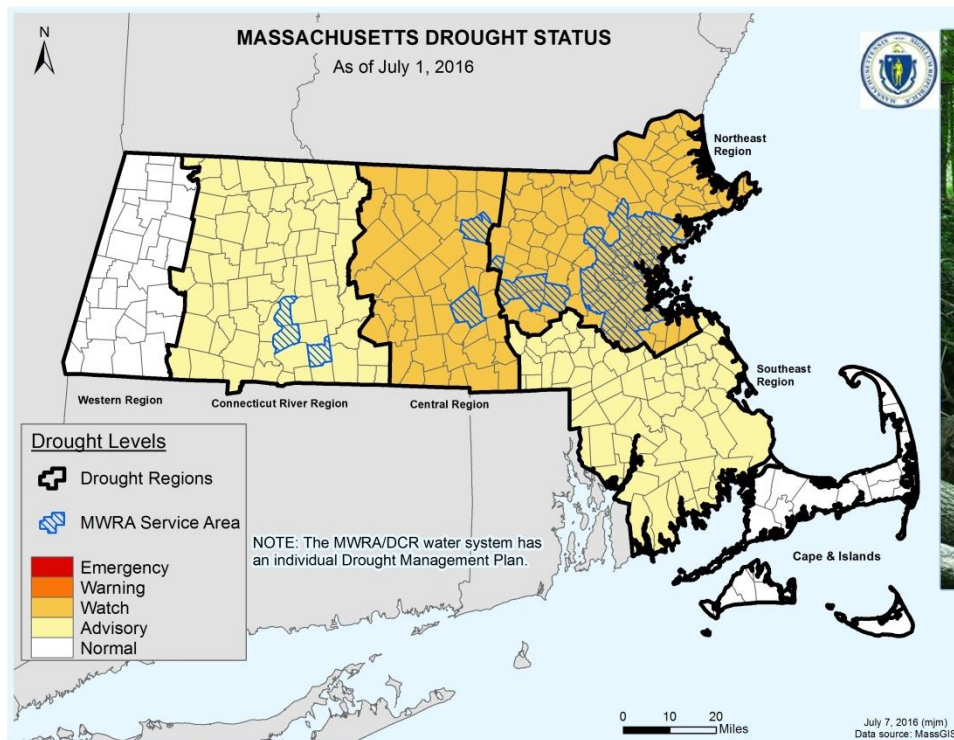
The twelve-seat Commission includes appointees from seven state agencies or offices and five public members.

The Commission's Executive Director, based at the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), and its technical staff, based at the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Office of Water Resources, work with state and federal agencies and members of the public to support the Commission's work.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMISSION

1. Spearhead **water policy** and **long-range water resources planning** for Massachusetts
2. Manage a **statewide precipitation network** for monitoring and critical research
3. Cooperate with the USGS to provide timely **scientific research and real-time hydrologic monitoring statewide**
4. Administer the **Interbasin Transfer Act** to ensure environmental protection when it is necessary to transfer water or wastewater between the major river basins of the state
5. Closely track hydrologic conditions and advise the state **Drought Management Task Force** in response to drought conditions
6. Provide **Water Needs Forecasts** for approximately 180 communities for their long-range planning and for use in applying for water withdrawal permits
7. Establish statewide **Water Conservation Standards** to encourage efficient use of water
8. **Review and approve water regulations** as mandated by statute
9. Provide a **forum for public input, coordination, and diverse viewpoints** on current and long-term water policies and issues at monthly meetings

These responsibilities establish the scientific and policy foundation for the sustainability of Massachusetts' water resources.



May Brook, Holland. Low Streamflows Starting to Emerge, June 2016.
(Photo Courtesy of DER)



Weather Station and Rain Gage in Precipitation Monitoring Network



Monitoring Groundwater Observation Wells



Consultation with Water Suppliers on Water Needs Forecasting

COMMISSION PROGRAMS	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND FY 2016 WORK
<p>TRACKING HYDROLOGIC CONDITIONS AND ADVISING ON DROUGHT</p> <p>www.mass.gov/dcr/water-data-tracking</p> <p>www.mass.gov/dcr/drought</p> <p>www.mass.gov/eea/wrc-dmtf</p>	<p>WRC staff monitor and report water conditions monthly, including precipitation trends, rainfall deficits, river conditions, groundwater levels, and drought status.</p> <p>Operational since 1956, the Commission-managed precipitation monitoring network provides data from more than 200 active and historical monitoring stations in Massachusetts. These data are used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitor for drought • support climate research • update design standards for infrastructure <p>In FY2016, near-record low snowfall contributed to reduced spring streamflow and advisory-level precipitation deficits by May. Four of the state's six drought regions had reached the drought advisory or watch level by June, triggering an early July meeting of the Drought Management Task Force.</p>
<p>THE USGS COOPERATIVE PROGRAM</p> <p>www.mass.gov/eea/coop-wr</p>	<p>The U.S. Geological Survey and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have had a water resources partnership since 1904, when the state's first modern stream gage was installed in the Connecticut River. The Cooperative program currently maintains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 57-time streamflow gages, • 4 tidal gages, • 4 weather stations, and • 91 groundwater observation wells <p>In FY2016, WRC staff identified 39 groundwater observation wells that need to be replaced and sought funding through a new USGS grant program.</p>
<p>THE INTERBASIN TRANSFER ACT (ITA)</p> <p>www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/water-res-protection/interbasin-transfer-act/</p>	<p>The ITA protects Massachusetts' vital water resources and the communities that rely on them. It ensures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities transferring drinking water and wastewater between basins practice water conservation • Hydrology in the donor basin is protected • The process is transparent and promotes public input. <p>In FY2016, EEA held listening sessions for the ITA regulation revisions, and subsequently, developed draft ITA regulation revisions.</p> <p>The Commission approved a request for a determination of insignificance from the Ledgeview at Wrentham project and reviewed two applications for approval under the Act (from the Towns of Ashland and North Reading).</p>

COMMISSION PROGRAMS	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND FY2016 WORK
<p data-bbox="224 415 488 485">WATER NEEDS FORECASTS</p> <p data-bbox="183 533 532 590">www.mass.gov/eea/wnf-method</p>	<p data-bbox="563 317 1422 415">Commission staff work with public water suppliers to develop 15-to 20-year water needs forecasts, using a methodology approved by the Commission.</p> <p data-bbox="563 453 1446 520">The forecasts are used by suppliers in applying for Water Management Act (WMA) permits and in long-range planning.</p> <p data-bbox="563 558 1463 695">In FY2016, staff worked with 14 public water suppliers in five river basins to develop forecasts. Staff also participated in outreach workshops in five basins, helping to explain the forecast process and the WMA permit renewal process.</p>
<p data-bbox="188 789 529 858">WATER CONSERVATION STANDARDS</p> <p data-bbox="183 907 532 934">www.mass.gov/eea/wcs-2012</p>	<p data-bbox="563 743 1414 842">The Commission establishes the Massachusetts Water Conservation Standards, which, since 1992, have set statewide goals for water-use efficiency and provide guidance for effective conservation.</p> <p data-bbox="563 879 1463 978">In FY2016, the Commission continued a review and discussion of draft updates and provided technical support to MassDEP on piloting improved methods of reducing water loss in water supply systems.</p>
<p data-bbox="204 1142 513 1211">OVERSIGHT OF STATE WATER PROGRAMS</p>	<p data-bbox="563 1037 1414 1136">By statute, the Commission reviews certain water regulations promulgated by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), providing an additional public forum for comment.</p> <p data-bbox="563 1173 1382 1241">In FY2016, the Commission reviewed 11 water- and wastewater-related regulations related to 310 CMR and 314 CMR.</p> <p data-bbox="563 1260 1471 1325">The Commission also held briefings on regulations for and approaches to reducing levels of lead in drinking water.</p>

COMMISSION MEMBERS AND KEY CONTACTS

AGENCY MEMBERS:

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Chair & Member –

Matthew A. Beaton, Secretary

Designee – **Kathleen Baskin**,

Commission Executive Director

(Resigned July 2016)

Dept. of Housing and Community Development

Member – **Chrystal Kornegay**, Undersecretary

Designee – **Linda Balzotti**

Department of Conservation and Recreation

Member – **Leo Roy**, Commissioner

Designee – **Jonathan Yeo**

Department of Environmental Protection

Member - **Martin Suuberg**, Commissioner

Designee – **Douglas Fine**

Department of Agricultural Resources

Member – **John LeBeaux**, Commissioner

Designee – **Catherine de Ronde**

Department of Fish and Game

Member - **George Peterson, Jr.**, Commissioner

Designee - **Todd Richards**

Office of Coastal Zone Management (non-voting member)

Member - **Bruce Carlisle**, Director

Designee - **Todd Callaghan**

PUBLIC MEMBERS:

Robert Zimmerman, Charles River
Watershed Association

Thomas Cambareri, Cape Cod Commission

Kenneth Weismantel, Hopkinton, MA

Raymond Jack, Department of Public
Works, Town of Falmouth

Paul Matthews, 495/MetroWest Partnership

KEY CONTACTS:

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Michele Drury, Water Resources Planner

Sara Cohen, Water Resources Specialist

Vanessa Curran, Water Resources Scientist

Erin Graham, Environmental Engineer

Linda Hutchins, Hydrologist (Resigned September 2016)

Marilyn McCrory, Regional Planner

Cover photo: Nashua River
Credit: V. Curran